

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 305589 TOSEC 250109

FOLLOWING REPEAT ROME 18949 ACTION SECSTATE INFO DIA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 18949

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: SOCIALIST PARTY SECRETARY THREATENS GOVERNMENT CRISIS

SUMMARY. IN SIGNED EDITORIAL IN DEC. 31 EDITION OF PSI
DAILY AVANTI* SOCIALIST PARTY SECRETARY DE MARTINO THREATENED
TO WITHDRAW SOCIALIST SUPPORT FROM MORO-LA MALFA GOVERNMENT.
DE MARTINO CHARGED THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS
HAVE SHOWN "CONTEMPT" FOR SOCIALIST VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT
PROGRAMS (EG. INDUSTRIAL RESTRUCTURING PORTION OF MEDIUM
TERM ECONOMIC PLAN) AND HAVE INSTEAD SOUGHT INDIRECT COMMUNIST
(PCI) SUPPORT IN PARLIAMENT WHILE MAINTAINING PUBLICALLY THAT
PCI REMAINS IN "OPPOSITION" ROLE. DE MARTINO ASKED RHETORICALLY
WHETHER IT IS NOT NOW TIME TO FACE UP TO THE FACT THAT
"GOVERNMENT MAJORITY HAS GRADUALLY REACHED THE POINT OF DISSOLU-
TION." HOWEVER, HE IMPLIED THAT CRISIS MIGHT BE AVOIDED IF
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WOULD ESTABLISH A "NEW RELATIONSHIP" WITH
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THE PSI AND FORMALLY ACCEPT SUPPORT IN PARLIAMENT FROM "ENTIRE

LEFT" (I.E. INCLUDING PCI). PSI DIRECTORATE MEETING JANUARY 7 EXPECTED TO DECIDE WHETHER TO WITHDRAW PSI SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENT. EMBASSY BELIEVES RISK OF GOVERNMENT CRISIS IS HIGH, ALTHOUGH EXACT TIMING IS UNCERTAIN. DE MARTINO MOTIVATED BY DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND IN PSI BEFORE CONGRESS AND BY WILLINGNESS TO RISK EARLY ELECTIONS IN ORDER TO REGAIN THE INITIATIVE FOR THE PSI IN THE POLITICAL GAME. END SUMMARY.

1. DECEMBER 31 SOCIALIST PARTY DAILY CARRIES SIGNED EDITORIAL BY PSI SECRETARY DE MARTINO ENTITLED "NEW SOLUTIONS FOR A GRAVE CRISIS." EDITORIAL OPENS WITH STATEMENT THAT JUNE 15 ELECTIONS (IN WHICH COMMUNISTS GAINED HEAVILY) CLEARLY SHOWED NEED FOR COURAGEOUS NEW GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND "SOME FORM OF COMMUNIST ASSOCIATION WITH THE (GOVERNING) MAJORITY." SINCE THAT TIME, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) HAVE SPOKEN MANY "BEAUTIFUL WORDS" ABOUT A NEW, FAVORED RELATIONS SHIP WITH THE PSI BUT HAVE DONE "LITTLE OR NOTHING" IN CONCRETE TERMS TO IMPLEMENT IT.

2. IN STEAD, THE DC-REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT HAS SHOWN "CONTEMPT" FOR THE VIEWS OF THE OTHER PARTIES IN THE MAJORITY (PSI AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS) ON GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS, EVEN INCLUDING THOSE ECONOMIC PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO FIGHT RECESSION AND UNEMPLOYMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, MORO-LA MALFA GOVERNMENT HAS PLAYED UP TO THE COMMUNISTS IN SEARCH OF "BENEVOLENCE AND SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL SUPPORT," WHILE REITERATING THAT THE PCI IS AN "OPPOSITION PARTY" AND MUST REMAIN ONE.

3. WE HAD "HOPED", WRITES DE MARTINO, THAT OUR SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT COULD CONTINUE UNTIL PSI AND DC CONGRESSES (IN FEBRUARY--EARLY MARCH). BUT TODAY, "AFTER WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN RECENT DAYS" (EG. APPROVAL BY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF INDUSTRIAL PORTION OF GOVERNMENT'S MEDIUM TERM ECONOMIC PLAN--SEPTEL) WE BEGIN TO "DESPAIR" OF SUCH A POSSIBILITY. "WE MUST ASK OURSELVES" IF THE MOMENT HAS NOT ARRIVED FOR A "DIALOGUE" AMONG THE PARTIES BASED ON RECOGNITION OF FACT THAT "GOVERNMENT MAJORITY HAS GRADUALLY REACHED THE POINT OF DISSOLUTION (SI E VENUTA DISSOLVENDO)."

4. DE MARTINO EXPRESSES AWARENESS OF ARGUMENTS AGAINST A
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GOVERNMENT CRISIS NOW AND STATES THAT PSI DOES NOT WANT EARLY ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH THESE COULD BRING "SOME ADVANTAGE" TO PARTY. HOWEVER, HE EXPRESSES CONVICTION THAT CRISIS NOW NEED NOT NECESSARILY LEAD TO EARLY ELECTIONS. INDEED, "IN THE PRESENT PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION CONDITIONS EXIST TO GIVE LIFE TO A NEW GOVERNMENT CAPABLE, BECAUSE OF ITS PARLIAMENTARY BASE (MAJORITY), TO FACE A SITUATION WHICH HAS REALLY BECOME ONE OF EMERGENCY."

5. IT IS UP TO THE DC", DE MARTINO CONTINUES, TO ESTABLISH A "NEW RELATIONSHIP" WITH THE PSI BASED ON "COURAGEOUS CHOICES", "ABANDONMENT OF IDEAS OF HEGEMONY", AND ON THE "WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE SUPPORT, EVEN NOT NEGOTIATED, OF THE ENTIRE LEFT" IN FACING THE PRESENT CRISIS. DE MARTINO'S REFERENCE IS CLEAR TO PREVIOUS PSI DEMANDS THAT PCI BE "ASSOCIATED" IN SOME MANNER WITH GOVERNING MAJORITY.

6. DE MARTINO THEN REPEATS SUBSTANCE OF PSI "ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY" AND CALLS FOR "SIMPLIFICATION" OF POLITICAL LINEUPS LEADING TO COMPETITION BETWEEN CONSERVATIVE OR CENTRIST PARTY AND FORCES OF THE LEFT. A CONDITION FOR THIS IS A DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PCI AND PSI AND "FULL AUTONOMY OF THE COMMUNISTS VIS-A-VIS SOVIET BLOC." UNTIL THESE CONDITIONS CAN BE FULFILLED, HOWEVER, DE MARTINO STATES THAT A "SOCIALIST CONTRIBUTION TO THE GOVERNMENT" CANNOT BE EXCLUDED. HE THUS LEAVES OPEN POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE DC-PSI COLLABORATION UNTIL SOCIALIST "ALTERNATIVE" BECOMES FEASIBLE.

7. COMMENT. EMBASSY BELIEVES DE MARTINO BROADSIDE INDICATES STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT SOCIALISTS MAY CHOSE TO PULL PLUG ON MORO GOVERNMENT IN NEAR FUTURE. DE MARTINO'S MOTIVATIONS ARE CLOUDY, BUT APPEAR TO INVOLVE DEFENSIVE RESPONSE TO RISING PRESSURE FOR CRISIS WITHIN PSI LED BY MANCINI AND NENNI FORCES. SOCIALISTS HAVE FELT INCREASINGLY CUT OUT OF POLITICAL GAME AS PCI HAS REPEATEDLY OFFERED BEHIND-THE-SCENES PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT FOR MORO GOVERNMENT WHILE RETAINING PUBLIC CREDENTIALS AS "OPPOSITION PARTY." ALTHOUGH SOCIALIST DECISION TO PRECIPITATE CRISIS NOW APPEARS PROBABLE, IT IS MUCH TOO EARLY TO ESTIMATE EXACT TIMING OF MOVE, IMPACT ON KEY PSI AND DC PARTY CONGRESSES, AND THE EFFECT OF SUCH A CRISIS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. VOLPE UNQTE ROBINSON
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